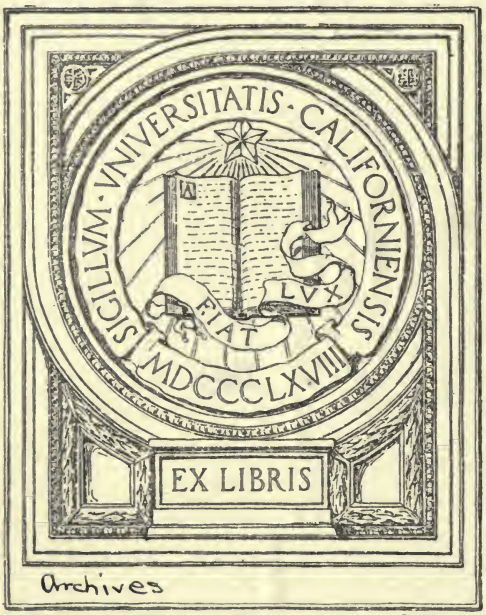
GIFT OF



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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

MR. H. D. BACON'S PROPOSED GIFT

TO THE

UNIVERSITY.

MEMORIAL of the REGENTS

AND

CORRESPONDENCE.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and Assembly of the State of California:

The memorial of the Regents of the University of the State of California respectfully shows:

That on the thirteenth day of December 1877, Henry D. Bacon, Esq., a citizen of said State, presented to the said Regents, at their quarterly meeting, a communication of which a copy is hereto annexed and made a part of this memorial, whereby he offered to contribute to the University a library of several thousand volumes, and a collection of works of art, sculpture and painting, valued at fifty thousand dollars, together with a money donation of twenty-five thousand dollars; provided the State of California should appropriate a like sum at the next, to wit: the present meeting of the Legislature, to be used, conjointly with the former sum, in erecting the first subdivision of a building dedicated to the purposes of a library and art gallery; and provided further that your memorialists, and himself, could agree upon a method of organizing such library and gallery, in connection with the University;—to which end he solicited the appointment of a Committee of the Board of Regents of said University to confer with him upon the subject.

And your memorialists further show that at the said meeting they determined to accept the donation aforesaid, if the

terms and method thereof could be agreed to by the donor and themselves, and the Legislature would consent to order the prescribed appropriation; and thereupon your memorialists appointed a special Committee, consisting of the undersigned, with full power to treat with Mr. Bacon on the subject of the gift proposed, to agree with him upon the method of organizing such a library and gallery of art, and to present to the Honorable the Legislature of the State the petition of your memorialists praying that it make the appropriation specified, for the purposes aforesaid.

And your memorialists further show that they have conferred and agreed with Mr. Bacon on the terms and conditions of the said donation, to render which effective and complete, nothing now remains but the sanction of the Legislature to an appropriation by the State of twenty-five thousand dollars, which shall be employed (in addition to the twenty-five thousand Mr. Bacon proposes to present) as a fund for the erection of a suitable building dedicated to the purposes of a library and gallery of art, belonging to the University, and to the accommodation of the gift aforesaid.

And your memorialists further show that the said donor has agreed with them to bestow upon the said University the said library and gallery of art, and the said sum of money, without any further or other condition than that the Legislature shall appropriate a similar sum towards the erection of a building proper to contain the same, and to serve as a library and gallery of art.

And your memorialists further show that the said donor does not make it an imperative requirement of his gift that the said building should constitute the first subdivision of a more extensive edifice to be dedicated to the purposes aforesaid, but is willing that it should be erected as a structure complete and perfect in itself, and fully competent in all respects for the intended uses; yet so constructed that it may hereafter, without any impairment of its architectural uniformity and adaptation, be rendered a portion of a larger edifice to be appropriated to the same objects in the growth of the future, whenever the public resources of the State or the munificence of private liberality shall permit.

Your memorialists therefore pray that in order to secure to the University and the State the possession of this valuable gift, which they are assured is but the precursor to others of great value and variety, the Honorable the Senate, and the

Assembly, will make an appropriation of twenty-five thousand dollars or upwards towards the erection of a building upon grounds of the University already selected and adjacent to the present buildings, which shall be dedicated to the purposes hereinbefore described.

HORATIO STEBBINS.
JOHN LECONTE.
JOS. W. WINANS.
J. WEST MARTIN.
GEORGE DAVIDSON.
COMMITTEE.

I approve the foregoing.

H. D. BACON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. BACON'S PROPOSITION.

SAN FRANCISCO, November 23, 1877.

To the Board of Regents of the University of California:

GENTLEMEN:

As the result of an accumulation of many years, I have a valuable collection of works of art, sculpture and paintings, and a library of several thousand volumes of standard and miscellaneous works, selected with much care.

For some years I have been considering how I could best bring them into the service of the public, and my mind is pretty well settled into the conviction that, through the instrumentality of the University of California, the object sought could be most surely realized.

California has decided that the University shall be the highest type of excellence in everything pertaining to education in the most advanced branches of mathematics, physics as connected with chemistry, mining and agriculture, etc., history and literature; and it seems to me the basis of the institution is broad enough to embrace instruction in the so-called fine arts.

At the present time, when it is doubtless of the utmost importance that the State should contribute liberally to the establishment upon the most substantial basis of the arts and sciences tending to the most rapid development of the great natural resources of its agricultural and mining, I have supposed it would neither be prudent nor wise to ask for large appropriations from its treasury, to make provision for a costly structure in which a large collection of books and works of art could be conveniently and safely deposited, or to provide for the books and the works of art; and yet, under proper conditions, it has seemed to me the State would even now co-operate in beginning such a provision.

I have also supposed that your Board, if, upon a careful examination of the subject, should regard it judicious and proper, would assume the responsibility of setting apart and devoting to it ample and properly located grounds for the complete structure, upon which to commence the erection of a building designed to meet, ultimately, the necessity of a repository for a vast library, and galleries for the exhibition of the æsthetic arts. In this connection I have thought it not unlikely that, at an early day, the San Francisco Art Association, if agreeable to your Board, might desire to become auxillary to the University, and whether so or not, what it has done and is doing for the advancement of art, together with the increasing number of artists on this coast, who are rapidly advancing to eminence and the front rank in their profession, would soon do much in adorning the walls of the proposed structure with specimens of the choicest works, and that, too, without cost to the University.

California is not only increasing in wealth in an unparalleled degree, and with it her citizens are very much disposed to liberality in securing the best works of art; and with a noble structure in which to deposit such things, very many would esteem it a privilege to contribute to the education of a correct and refining taste of not only students but the public generally. The library, under similar influences, would grow into great usefulness and at a moderate cost to the University or State.

Cost is not always a safe criterion to judge of the value of things, and most often is this the case when applied to what, by courtesy, are called works of art; but as I wish to get a starting point in submitting my views to your consideration; and as I do not rely alone upon my own judgment as to the money value

or excellence of the works of art and books which I am considering, I do not anticipate adverse criticism from the well informed, when I place a value of fifty thousand dollars, (they have cost me much more) on that portion which I design embracing in what follows:

My plan is that, if we can agree upon a method of organization of a library and art gallery in connection with the University, to contribute to it a large part of my books and works of art, together with twenty five thousand dollars in money, provided the State will appropriate a like sum at the next meeting of the Legislature, to be used conjointly in erecting the first subdivision of the building to be dedicated to aforesaid purposes.

If this fifty thousand dollars could be devoted almost exclusively to the structure, there would be secured, probably a subdivision which would meet requirements until the State would feel at liberty to make further appropriations for needed enlargements from time to time. And as we have in California architects who have given evidence of much genius, I cannot doubt there would be such a spirit of emulation among them to provide the University plans, specifications and estimates, and without cost to it, so that the fifty thousand dollars could practically be used in the structure alone. I do not think I have anticipated too much from our architects; architecture being one of the highest branches of art, there would be ample motive to secure success in the competition, as he who attained it would indelibly fix and enshrine his name with, and be almost the first to contribute to this endowment.

It may be urged that the State will not appropriate funds for such a purpose. It is not my province or purpose to urge that it should; but I think we have reason to believe that the State not only now has, but in the future will have an increasing pride in the prosperity and greatness of the University. If it has not already accomplished all that was originally hoped from it, it has certainly done very much to elevate the standard of education, and has stimulated all classes of our citizens to closer thought and observation of systems of education which are being pressed upon public attention, and the leading educators of the day, and out of this activity of mind and investigation, under the guidance of your Board and the able Faculty of the University, in a short time the best of these systems will be selected and crystallized in the most useful forms. Soon,

too, we shall begin to feel the beneficent effects of the noble endowments of Lick for the promotion of science, and under such influences our Legislatures will feel that money contributed to advance and educate its sons and daughters is far preferable to expenditures in punishing and repressing crime, the fruits most often of ignorance. Our State, too, owing to the wise provisions of its Constitution, and perhaps the governing desire of its citizens, is almost free from debt without burdening itself with taxation, can easily promote the intellectual advancement of its citizens. But this argument is unnecessary and perhaps lacking in good taste.

If you regard the suggestions worthy of consideration, I shall take pleasure in conferring with a Committee of your Board, or otherwise on the subject. I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. D. Bacon.

REPLY OF THE REGENTS.

San Francisco, December 13th, 1877.

Henry D. Bacon, Esq.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 23rd of November was presented to the Board of Regents of the University to-day, at an adjourned meeting, by Mr. Regent Martin. It was received with deep interest and admiration. We know not which most to admire, the spirit or manner of it.

It was referred to us, the undersigned, as a special committee, to acknowledge the receipt of it, to pay you the respects of the Board, and to ask your pleasure to give the Committee an early opportunity to meet you.

It is not within the scope of this correspondence for us to express the satisfaction we feel at your intelligent views and honorable acts, neither to enlarge upon the various interesting points suggested in your letter. The Committee only wish to offer you the grateful acknowledgments of the Board, and request you to appoint an early day when you will receive them. We are your obliged fellow-citizens,

Horatio Stebbins,
J. West Martin,
George Davidson,
J. W. Winans,
John LeConte.

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